THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIARJUN CHARAN SETHI): (a) to (d) As per information received from Government of Rajasthan, upto 10.4.2002, there are 93,946 rural habitations in Rajasthan, out of which 76,509 habitations are fully covered (FC) 11,079 are partially covered (PC) and the remaining 6,358 are not covered (NC) under rural water supply programme. Out of 67,553 habitations surveyed for water quality, the number of quality affected habitations are fluoride (24,798), salinity (32,034), nitrate (23,290) and iron (270). Only 30,887 villages and habitations are reported to be free from water quality problem. Since Rajasthan has high number of NC/PC habitations, more funds are being allocated to it. Rajasthan is one of the seven states where Desert Development Programme (DDP) under Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) with 100% Central Assistance is being implemented by Government of India.

Rural drinking water supply is a State subject. State Governments take up schemes/projects for providing safe drinking water in rural areas from their own resources. Government of India supplements the efforts of the State Governments and provides financial assistance under Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). Under ARWSP, upto 20% of the allotted funds can be utilised by the States to tackle water quality problems in drinking water, including excess arsenic, fluoride, salinity, iron etc. While making allocation under ARWSP, due weightage is given for States under Desert Development Programme (DDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), Hill Areas Development Programme (HADP) and special category Hill States in terms of rural areas.

Acquisition of Aircrafts by Air India

*688. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
DR.T.SUBBARAM1 REDDY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India has prepared its own plan to acquire 23 new aircrafts over the next five years;

(b) whether Air India is suffering losses continuously for the last three years;

(c) whether during 2001-2002 Air India has earned a net profit of Rs. 30 crore;

(d) if so, whether in view of this, Air India has prepared a Rs. 10,000 crore acquisition plan;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(0 by when, the plan is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) to (f)Air India has been incurring losses since 1995-96. However, it has earned a net profit of Rs. 471 crores during the period April, 2001 to January 2002. Based on Traffic trends during February and March 2002, it is estimated that net profit for the financial year 2001 -2002 would be higher.

Air India has constituted an in-house Expert Committee to develop Air India's fleet plan for the next five years. The Committee is expected to submit its report shortly.

Development of tourist circuits

*689. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to throw open development of new tourist circuits in the country to foreigners;

(b) if so, the tourist circuits proposed to be given for development together with the name of States in which they are located; and

(c) the conditions on which this development is to be done?

THE MINISTER OFTOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) During the Tenth Five Year Plan the Department of Tourism, Government of India proposes to identify six travel circuits in the country on an annual basis and develop them to international standards. During the Annual Plan 2002-03, an amount of Rs. 41.50 crores has been earmarked for the integrated development of six circuits. These circuits will be finalised and developed in close coordination and partnership with the State/UT Governments and the concerned Government of India Departments.

Exemption of excise duty on cement to Gujarat

*690. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Gujarat Government has requested the Central Government for exemption of excise duty on sale of cement to the earthquake affected people for rehabilitation and reconstruction work;